

Free

Issue 9 - 2022

Lived Experience Telephone Support Service

# ***LETSS CONNECT***

***Mental Health Month Edition***



**Articles | Recipes | Worksheets | Reviews & more!**

**Links to  
Wellbeing**

# Links to Wellbeing

**Counselling and  
Mental Health Support  
Across Central  
Southern Adelaide**

Links to Wellbeing is a consortium commissioned by the Adelaide PHN and run in partnership between Neami National, Mind Australia, Skylight Mental Health and Uniting Care Wesley Bowden.





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LETSSAus



letssaus



letss.org.au

1800 013 755

# MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

**Oct 1st - 31st 2022**

*Building Resilience: Communities and Connections*

This is the campaign theme for The National Mental Health Month 2022. What does this mean?

A key way to building resilience is through connections. Connections within ourselves, our communities, friends and families. Our support systems play an integral role in building resilience and help to make us feel less stressed when we are struggling.

What is important to remember is that having the network in place is only step one, step two is to remember to connect with them in times of need.

Our community can also present opportunities to build connections by providing a sense of belonging, creating social connections, advocating for and supporting one another; all of which are associated with improved quality of life and mental wellbeing.



National Mental Health Month aims to educate, promote and raise awareness for mental health in Australia.

Take a look at the below links where you can find numerous resources, events and activities to get involved.

[mentalhealthmonth.wayahead.org.au](https://mentalhealthmonth.wayahead.org.au)

[mhfa.org.au/cms/national-mental-health-month-2022](https://mhfa.org.au/cms/national-mental-health-month-2022)

Let's decrease the stigma, help empower others to seek help and start a conversation.





# Progressive Muscle Relaxation

## (PMR)

If you have not been recommended this before - you are in for a delightful surprise! PMR helps break the stress-tension cycle which can help you relax your body, easing some of the general anxieties that we may feel

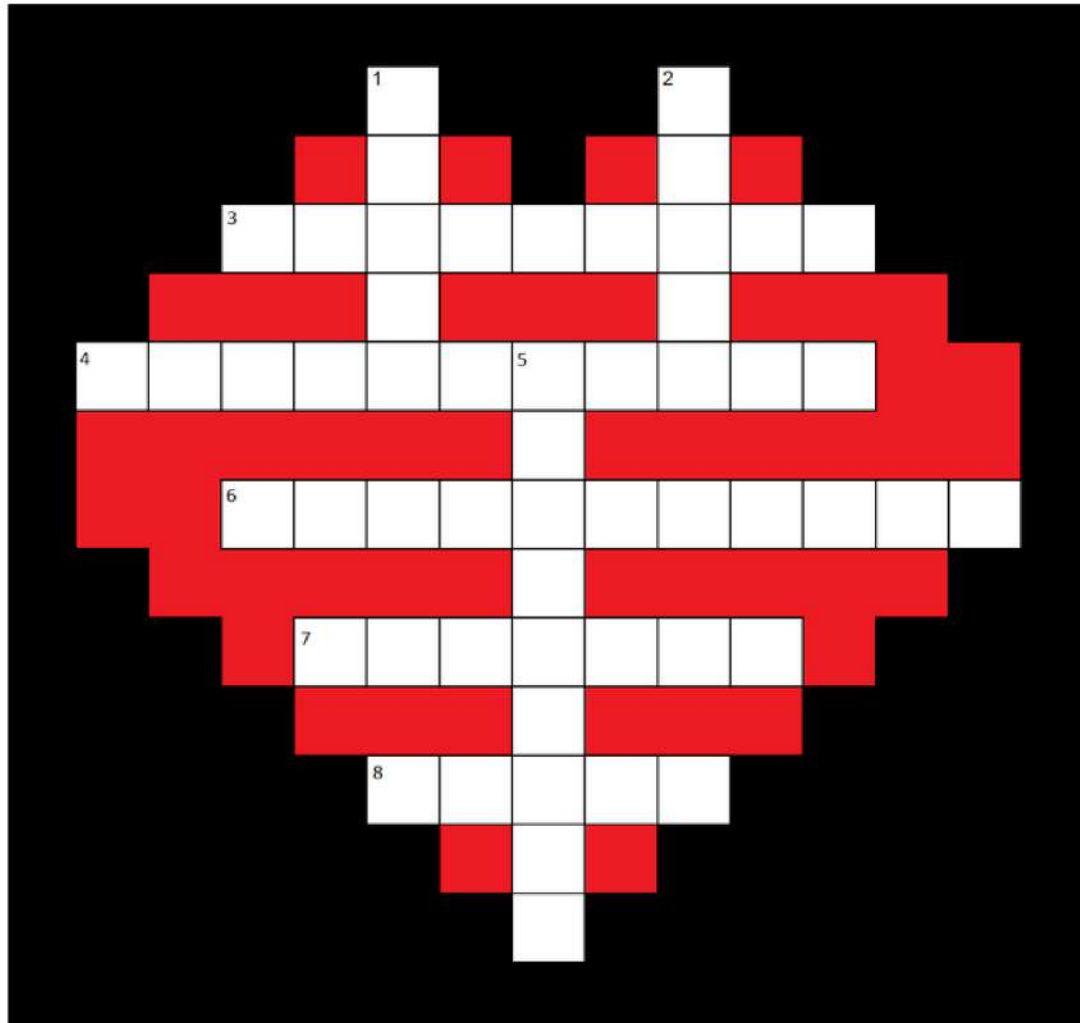
Holding tension in our muscles can signal to our brain that something is not feeling right. This can help us to understand what we are feeling but it can also be problematic at times where we need to relax, like when trying to fall asleep.

PMR systematically works through each part of the body to reset the muscle-mind-tension connection. In this example, we will be moving from head to toe tensing each muscle for 5 seconds and then releasing each muscle to help you relax!

- Tense the muscles in your face, jaw, and mouth for 5 seconds, release them, and do this two more times. You may feel the blood moving, and a tingling sensation. This is good!
- Next, tense your shoulders up to your ears, repeat twice
- Next, move on to tensing your arms by clenching your fists and folding your arms at the elbow, towards your shoulders, then release them back down, repeat two more times
- Next, engage your core muscles in your abdomen, release, repeat twice
- Next, tense your thighs and calves, repeat this two more times
- Lastly, move on to clenching your feet, curl your toes, release, repeat twice
- Finish with three big breaths, holding for 5 seconds in-between each

By the end of this you are hopefully feeling more relaxed, if not you can go through this process over and over until you feel more relaxed. Remembering to hold for 5 seconds each time, and don't forget to breathe!. This is a great activity that you can complete anywhere – at your work, out with friends, lying in bed late at night (a key location for myself, personally). Try it out and see how you feel... we are hoping you will be feeling more relaxed.

# THE MINDFULNESS CORNER



## Across:

- 3 – A \_\_-in book may be used to distract yourself or relieve some tension.
- 4 – The process of strengthening yourself.
- 6 – The act of paying attention to the present moment without judgement.
- 7 – Many grounding exercises begin with one simple task; “just \_\_”.
- 8 – One form of artistic expression uses \_\_ and a canvas.

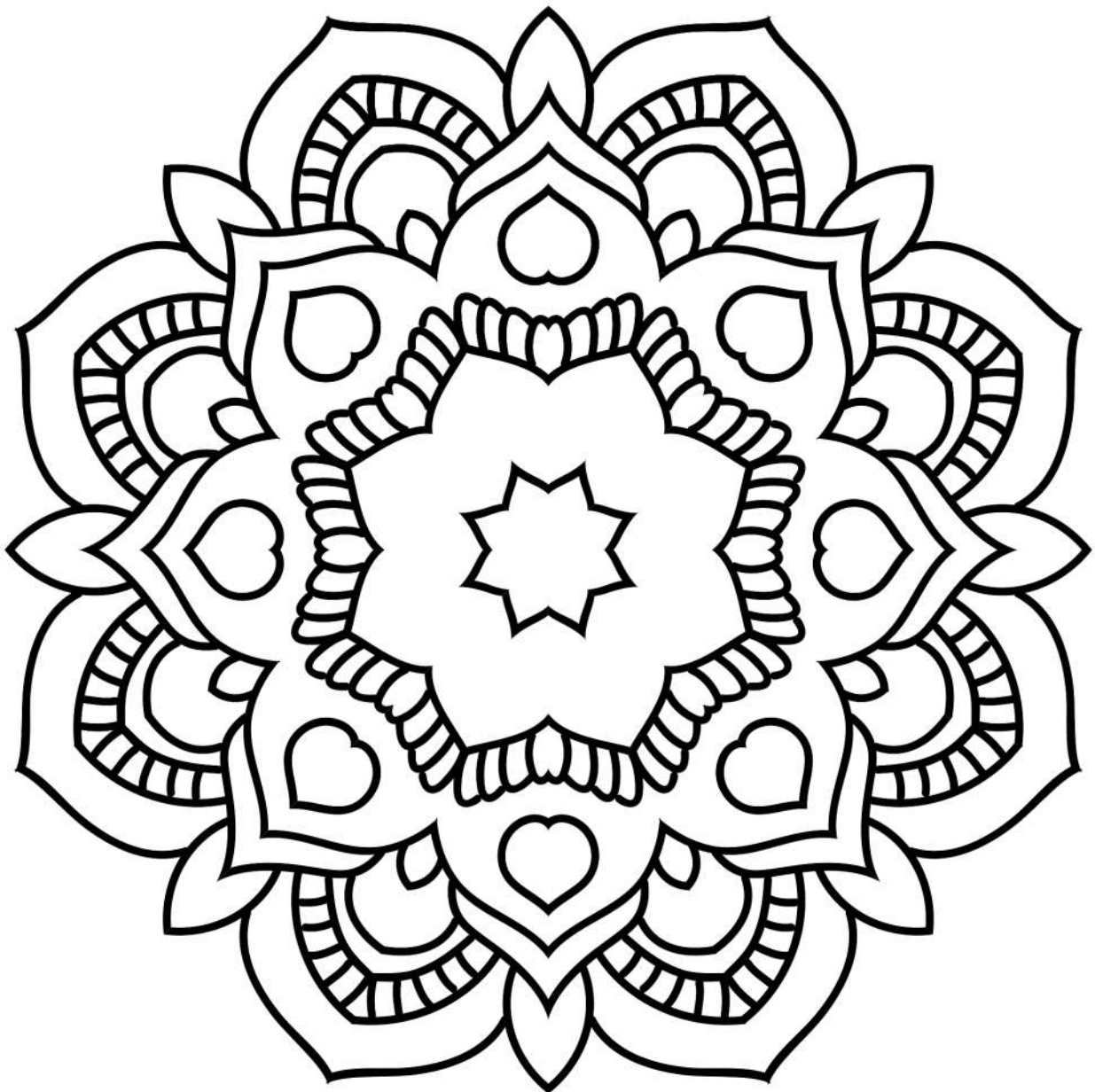
## Down:

- 1 – An important part of self-care is to \_\_ yourself time to rest.
- 2 – This not-for-profit is most known for promoting sexual health and LGBTIQA+ health.
- 5 – The process of looking at a situation through a different perspective.

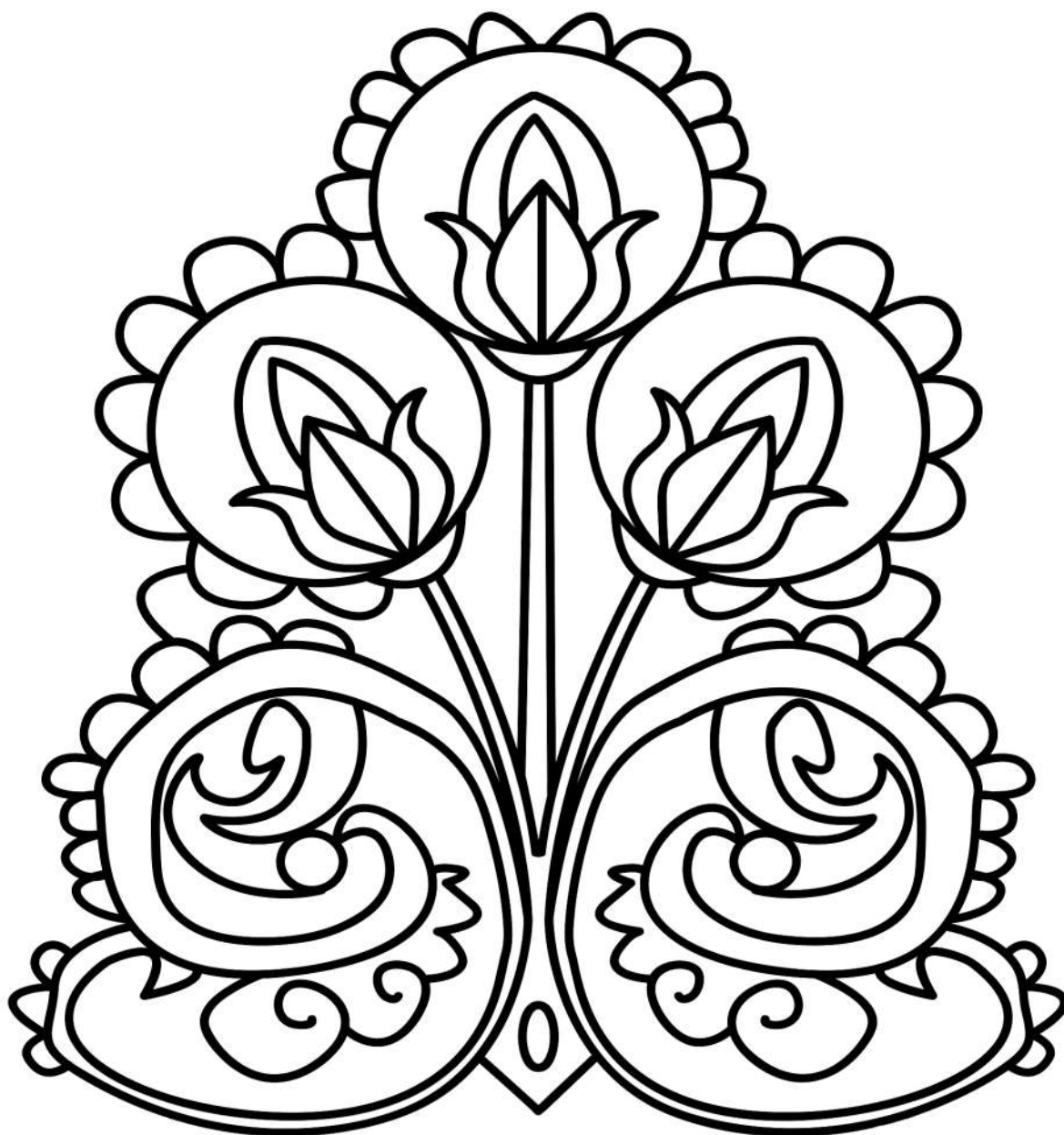


**Unjumble these words for strategies to unjumble your mind**

1. Writing in a N R U O A J L
2. Counting your T A S B H R E
3. Listening to C I M S U
4. Acknowledging what you can notice with your S S N E S E
5. Try to find something that starts with each E L T E T R of the alphabet
6. Give yourself space to E D I M A T D E
7. Treat yourself to some C F A E R L S E



# COLOUR IN



## ANSWERS

1. Journal  
2. Breaths  
3. Music  
4. Senses  
5. Letter  
6. Meditate  
7. Self-care

Across:  
3 - Colouring  
4 - Empowerment  
6 - Mindfulness  
7 - Breathe  
8 - Paint  
Down:  
1 - Allow  
2 - SHINE  
5 - Reframing





## ***Moving from 'loneliness' to 'aleness'***



Isolation and rates of loneliness have been on the rise since the COVID-19 pandemic arose in 2019. Feelings of loneliness come about when our social cup is not filled. This means our need for meaningful interactions with others is not at the quality or quantity we need to feel connected and valued. As human beings, we seek meaningful relationships and social connectedness to fuel our quality of life. However, this can look and mean different things to different people. Some people may only need a splash of connection in their cup to feel socially fulfilled, whereas others may need a gallon of social connection in order to keep away feelings of loneliness.

When our own, individual social cups are not consistently being filled we experience increased levels of vulnerability which impacts our mental and physical health. Loneliness may present as increased tiredness, low mood, changes in sleep, and a decrease in energy and motivation. Loneliness can sometimes feel like a snowball, the more lonely we feel the deeper our isolation becomes as we begin to take this on as an identity. It is important to remain aware of our thoughts, feelings and physical symptoms in order to take action or seek support as early as possible.





### **Comfortable in our own company**

Although as human beings we seek social interaction, spending time alone and being comfortable with our 'aloneness' can have benefits for our mental health. Indeed, this may involve a process of shifting our mindsets from feeling lonely, to becoming comfortable with being alone. Spending time by ourselves can increase our awareness of our qualities and unique characteristics. This can also increase our understanding of what we truly enjoy as there is no social pressure to participate in an activity nor is there a reason to compromise our own desires for the sake of others. Often, spending time alone is something many people aim to avoid as feelings of loneliness are uncomfortable and can lead to a decrease in confidence, self-worth and self-esteem. However, this begs the question, why do the external forces of other people dictate the way we feel about ourselves? Yes, as human beings we are social creatures but as individuals we are the experts in our own lives. So why should being constantly connected with others have such a sway on our self-worth?

Being alone increases our ability to become in-tune with what we truly value. Indeed, spending time by ourselves means we can get to know ourselves better. This does not mean social connectedness is not important, just that we may benefit from being more comfortable in our own company and increasing our acceptance of our internal self. As we become more self-aware, the way we express ourselves changes. We have a greater awareness of our boundaries, what truly brings us happiness and this allows us to grow as individuals. In short, if we are dependent on others as our sole sources of happiness and comfort, we are less likely to remain resilient and cope with the isolation when barriers arise that impact social connection such as COVID-19. This links to the idea of cultivating/creating happiness and meaning within ourselves.





Learning to appreciate our time alone can increase our ability to live "in the moment" as we are valuing our time alone and spending less time looking into the future for our next opportunity for a social connection. In terms of personal development, there is much to be gained through trusting your inner voice as your primary tool for guidance. This helps shape our worldview to see ourselves as a complete person; we do not need another person to fill our sense of identity.

If you do experience feelings of loneliness, it might be helpful to think internally about what might be lacking. Reflecting on this may help us access the creative and authentic aspects of ourselves. We can reflect and explore ourselves through creative avenues such as journaling, music, technical skills, art and movement. Getting creative is an exploratory process. Starting a new project that requires creative thinking can make us feel productive whilst also getting to know ourselves through creative expression.

### **Ideas to increase connection, with ourselves and others**

Becoming comfortable with our own company is a journey and something that needs to be practiced and deeply explored. During this exploration, it is normal to continue to feel feelings of loneliness from time to time. Indeed, these feelings can be difficult to avoid during a pandemic even if you are able to become your own best friend. At the end of the day, we all have social cups that do need to be filled.







Developing and having a routine provides clarity and direction during the day. Planning time for movement, reflection such as journaling and mindfulness, as well as increase predictability and our connection to our own mind and body. On the LETSS website there are resources that support the development of a routine, daily/weekly planners, and journaling and mindfulness ideas to support the development of a healthy routine.

Given the state of the world and the impact COVID-19 has had on our ability to connect with others the way we may have in the past, it is important to be creative to maintain or develop social connections in addition to becoming comfortable with our time spent alone. This will support our mental health and reduce feelings of loneliness. Here are some quick ideas that might be useful if feelings of loneliness are experienced:

### **Start a project or learn something new**

Keeping busy with activities and projects that have meaning to us is a great way to reduce our feelings of loneliness when we are by ourselves. Keeping our brains occupied through art, puzzles, brain teasers, building, creating or learning can support us to feel fulfilled and productive. This could be as simple as starting a colouring in book, cooking a new meal or looking into an online course in an area that interests you.





## **Volunteering**

Putting ourselves out there to volunteer has many positive impacts for our wellbeing. Volunteering, particularly for a meaningful cause, can provide a sense of purpose and achievement, while also connecting us with others who have similar interests. Yeung et al. (2018) suggests activities such as volunteering that involve helping others increases reward systems in our brain, thus increasing the production of our feel-good hormones (dopamine and serotonin). In short, helping others or the community through volunteering is a big help for mental health and social connectedness! There are many opportunities for in person and remote volunteering through [GoVolunteer.com.au](http://GoVolunteer.com.au) if this is something you want to explore.

## **Organised scheduled times for social connections**

Reaching out to friends and family is an obvious one. However, calling a friend up on a whim can be an anxiety provoking process, particularly if we have been feeling socially isolated. Scheduling in a regular time to check in and catch up with a friend can reduce anxiety around this process and increase personal accountability to ensure the interaction actually happens. This could even involve asking a friend to call you, again to reduce the anticipation that may come with initiating a call. A service such as Friendline (08 7078 6229), open 10am – 8pm 7 days a week, can also be a good resource to use if you find yourself unsure who to call for a meaningful chat.

## **Become involved in online gaming communities**

If you are already interested in gaming, seeking out online games that promote social interaction, teamwork and communication to achieve a desired goal is suggested to have some positive impacts on reducing feelings of loneliness. A study by Cheng et al. (2018) noted this interaction style does not mimic or replace existing social networks, however can have benefits for supporting mental health and social connectedness. Some options for online games that incorporate teamwork and involve connecting with others that enjoy gaming include DDraceNetwork, Bro Falls and Dota 2. However, there are many free games available on multiple platforms that allow you to connect with others!



### **DDraceNetwork**

**<https://store.steampowered.com/app/412220/DDraceNetwork/>**

### **Bro Falls**

**[https://store.steampowered.com/app/1590320/Bro\\_Falls/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/1590320/Bro_Falls/)**

### **Dota 2**

**[https://store.steampowered.com/app/570/Dota\\_2/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/570/Dota_2/)**

### **Online groups**

During pandemic times, social media has become a powerful tool in connecting likeminded people and communities. There have been studies that suggest that 'active' engagement in social media posts and message boards have led to decreases in depressive symptoms and loneliness.



However, studies have also found that 'passive' scrolling on social media lead to an increase in depressive symptoms and loneliness. In a nutshell, if you choose to seek social connection through social media and online groups, be proactive with your online interactions with others. If you catch yourself mindlessly scrolling, take a break and do something you enjoy. A good resource could be a service such as SANE that provides peer support via an online forum where you can remain anonymous and connect with others that may have similar experiences <https://www.sane.org/peer-support>.

We know sometimes feelings of loneliness can become overwhelming and cause us significant distress. If these feelings become too much there are services available to support you in times of need:

Lived Experience Telephone Support Service (LETSS) (5pm-11:30pm 7 days) – 1300 013 755 or webchat at [letss.org.au](http://letss.org.au)

Lifeline (24/7) – 13 11 14 or webchat <https://www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat/>

Beyond Blue (24/7) - 1300 22 4636 or webchat (1pm – 12am 7 days) <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support>

Mental Health Triage Service (24/7) - 13 14 65

For emergencies, please call 000



# A DAY OF MINDFULNESS IN ADELAIDE CITY

*Using the five senses*

## SIGHT

Whether you choose to walk, cycle, catch public transport, or drive into Adelaide City, take a moment to pause and be present whilst on your journey. For instance, if you are catching a train, perhaps you may notice the different types of trees and houses outside your window. If you are walking, try to bring your awareness to all the different things within your line of vision – people, window displays, the different buildings. Try not to think too heavily about these things – simply let yourself acknowledge and be aware of your surroundings.



## TOUCH

Enter Rundle Mall and let yourself explore the different types of shops and their contents. Feel the clothes and acknowledge the way it feels under your fingertips. Acknowledge the different types of textures – wool, satin, silk, leather etc. As you walk through Rundle Mall, focus on the way your feet feel as they touch the ground below. Allow yourself to think about the way the breeze feels across your face. Don't think too deeply. Just observe and acknowledge these different sensations.





# HEARING

Visit the Adelaide Botanic Garden and embrace all the different sounds. Listen to the birds chirping away in the trees, the wind blowing through the trees, the gentle sound of water flowing from the water fountain, the sound of people chatting at the café, the ducks quacking in the pond. Observe these sounds without overthinking it. Just simply acknowledge and let it wash over you.



# SMELL

Enter Adelaide Central Market and allow yourself to be plunged into a world full of vibrant smells. Take a moment to smell the different types of smells – everything ranging from chocolate to cured prosciutto. Perhaps some smells are better than others? Fish market, anyone?



# TASTE

Finally, treat yourself to perhaps some lunch or a coffee/tea. Find a nice comfortable café and allow yourself to enjoy your drink. Focus on the taste of coffee/tea. Is it sweet? Perhaps it is bitter and needs more sugar? Allow yourself to embrace and acknowledge the different sensations and different tastes upon your tongue.







The dictionary definition of a boundary is a line which marks the limits of an area; a dividing line. Similar to this, establishing boundaries for social interactions with others can involve setting constraints within our personal, romantic, family or work lives, in order to safeguard ourselves from manipulation, negativity, or violation by others. Setting boundaries is a crucial aspect of looking after our mental health and wellbeing, and is a form of self-compassion.

While boundaries can be psychological or emotional. For instance, letting someone know they have made you feel uncomfortable by what they have said or done. Boundaries can also be physical. For example, declining physical contact from particular people is a form of boundary setting.

As mentioned previously, establishing boundaries can be a healthy and necessary form of self-care. If we refrain from setting boundaries where they are needed, we can begin to feel depleted, taken advantage of, taken for granted, or intruded upon.





Poor boundaries can contribute to feelings of resentment, hurt, anger, and burnout. By giving ourselves permission to say "no" when we feel we need to, we help take care of ourselves. For example, by saying "no" to working late or attending a social event because you are tired, you are prioritising your need for rest. By blocking a phone number of someone who you feel has been harassing you, you are looking after your own emotional wellbeing.

### **Signs our boundaries may need reviewing**

- Sharing too much too soon or prying into others' lives. Boundaries are the invisible line we draw around parts of ourselves we're willing to share with others and what we like to keep private. We can cross a boundary by prying into parts of others' lives that they don't want to share. We can overstep a boundary by sharing a part of ourselves that makes others feel uncomfortable, and vice versa.
  - Closing yourself off and not expressing your needs or wants, or feeling guilty for saying 'yes' or 'no'.
- Often when we are beginning to set boundaries, we can experience feelings of guilt and ruminate about the consequences of setting the boundary. Sometimes the intensity of the feelings of guilt or rumination can lead us to refrain from setting boundaries at all and we stop expressing our needs or wants in fear of the consequences that could arise. This could look like saying 'yes' even when we don't feel comfortable or simply don't want to do something, or perhaps not communicating when we feel hurt by others' actions or comments.
- Not feeling that you have a sense of your own identity and allowing others to make decisions for you. Consequently, you may feel powerless. If we are always saying 'yes' to things even when we want to say 'no', we can lose sight of what we want, need, or even like. Having a strong sense of personal preference is a building block for identity formation. When our boundaries are too loose or even non-existent, we risk losing our sense of self. This can be a highly distressing feeling that can contribute to feelings of depression and anxiety.





## Signs our boundaries are healthy

- We can share information gradually, in a mutually sharing and trusting relationship.
- We are able to be assertive with our needs. We can confidently say YES or NO and be okay with others saying NO to us.
- We can recognise that our boundaries and needs are different from others, and this is okay.

## Setting boundaries can be hard

Debuting new boundaries is not always an easy and straight forward task. It can leave us feeling extremely uncomfortable when we are so used to being the one people 'rely on'. However, it is necessary and important for us to establish and enforce what we need and want, even if there is push back from the people in our lives.

There is a chance that people may try and test your limits, and see how serious you really are about your boundaries. In these moments, we may feel the most uncomfortable. It is important to remind yourself that you aren't doing anything wrong by letting people know what you feel your boundary is, and being as clear and consistent as we can will help the people in our lives adjust to the new way of interacting.

## Some steps that can be helpful when beginning to set boundaries:

**1. Clearly identify your boundary** – if you aren't clear about what your boundary is, it'll make it harder to be able to communicate your expectations.

**2. Understand why you need the boundary** – this will act as the motivation for setting the boundary and enforcing it.

**3. Be straight forward** – Try not to be vague in your communication of the boundary, even if it is in order to spare someone's feelings or avoid conflict. The kindest and most successful approach is to be direct.

**4. Don't apologise or give long explanations** – this kind of behaviour undermines your authority and gives the impression you're doing something wrong that requires an apology or justification.

**5. Use a calm and polite tone** – try to avoid setting boundaries in the middle of an argument. Yelling, sarcasm, or a condescending tone can put others on the defense and distract from the real issues.



**6.It can be helpful to start with tighter boundaries** – it's much easier to loosen up tight boundaries than it is to tighten loose boundaries.

**7.Address boundary violations early** – don't wait until someone's violated your boundary a dozen times before you speak up. It's not fair to assume that others know your boundaries until you've explained them.

**8.Don't make it personal** – setting a boundary isn't a personal attack. It can be helpful to use 'I' statements when communicating a boundary e.g. "I feel uncomfortable when you joke about this"; instead of, "You are so inconsiderate and like making me feel bad".

**9.Lean on a support system** – creating and enforcing boundaries is tough! Having trusted people you can lean on can make a huge difference.

**10.Trust your intuition** – slow down, and tune into yourself. Pay attention to what you're feeling. What is your gut telling you? If it feels wrong, make a change.





# Ultimate Coping Playlist

Make the perfect coping playlist for you by giving this challenge a try



<b>Entertainment</b>	A song that stays stuck in your head when you hear it.	A song you know all the words to.	Your favourite song from a movie.
<b>Revival</b>	A song that represents freedom.	A song that you'd listen to, to fall asleep.	A song that makes you feel pumped up.
<b>Strong Sensation</b>	A song that reminds you of a good memory.	A song that reminds you of someone you care about.	A song that reminds you of someone who cares about you.
<b>Diversion</b>	A song that makes you feel safe.	A song you find inspirational.	Your go to positivity song.
<b>Discharge</b>	A song that matches your vibe you get when you feel anxious or worried.	A song that matches your vibe when you feel annoyed or angry.	A song that matches your vibe when you feel sad or afraid.

A young man with short brown hair and a light beard is looking down at an open book he is holding. He is wearing a denim jacket over a dark shirt. In the background, there are bookshelves filled with books and a string of warm-toned pendant lights hanging from the ceiling. A semi-transparent white box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

# SELF-HELP LIBRARY

Scan the QR codes to access our online library of worksheets, or visit our website  
<https://www.letss.org.au/self-help>



**My Support  
Network**



**Self  
Compassion  
Journal**



## SELF-HELP LIBRARY

**Warning Signs  
and Triggers**



**Sensory  
Modulation**



**Wellbeing  
Plan**



**Things I Can  
Do For Myself**



## SELF-HELP LIBRARY

**Challenging  
Anxious  
Thoughts**



**Stress Kit**







## *lived experience peer worker...*

**Thank you for sitting down with me today. Could you please explain what the role of a lived experience peer worker is?**

"Essentially it is to support people's mental health from the perspective of having lived with mental health struggles. It's being able to listen and contribute to what someone who calls in is struggling with, and be informed from your own experience. This can often include having navigated the mental health system for support and experience with interventions and therapies. Even having taken medications for mood stability can be useful to inform peer practice in relating to others – I know it does for me."

**Are you able to share your understanding of the difference between a peer worker and a counsellor?**

"Having worked as both, I really appreciate the freedom I have as a peer worker to be creative in the approach I take with people. It's all dependent upon the individual and what's going on for them in the moment as to how I'll support. Some people just need to be listened to or have a colloquial [casual] chat with a bloke who has experienced depression to know they're not alone and that things do get better.

Mental health clinicians (counsellors, MH social workers, psychologists etc...) need to concern themselves with assessments and work from a perspective of psychological interventions.

While we definitely do risk assessment as peers and respond accordingly, we aren't boxed into a particular way of working with people dependent upon the theory or approach."



“

I really enjoy it when I am able to contribute to improving someone's day.

### Why did you decide to become a peer worker?

"I figured why not let some of the sh!ttest times in my life make a difference for others. I've experienced trauma and major depression and anxiety, and when that was actually happening it was a really difficult time and also was difficult to feel like things would improve. Having come out of that I can still remember and now really understand what people are saying when they say things like "I don't want to be here anymore"."

### What do you enjoy about your role?

"I really enjoy it when I am able to contribute to improving someone's day. This might mean that they feel well listened to, or that they feel like someone else "gets it" because you have shared some of your own experience, or it could be that you've given someone resources to be able to connect with other services or supports."

### If you feel comfortable, can you share what is the value that you see in working in the area of lived experience peer work?

"There is still stigma in society around mental ill health. Peer work is really legitimising the role that lived experience can play in in being able to provide understanding and skill to be able to approach it professionally in a different way to a clinical lens."

### How do you look after yourself and balance your own self-care while supporting others?

"I'm introverted and autistic so the time I have to myself between shifts is the best self-care in and of itself. People literally drain my batteries so I need my own time to recharge. I am a media freak so I love losing myself in tv shows, movies and games most of the time."



### If there was one thing you could tell people with mental ill health, what might that be?

"I often share the sentiment that sometimes life is not fair and it can be not very fun, and the most we can do is to be kind to ourselves and do things we like. This can be something very small such as making yourself a hot milo on a cold night when sleep is difficult or changing the sheets so the bed feels amazing and you've shown some care for yourself. Doing things we like is just up to the individual. It can be things like gaming, journaling, watching TV, walking, drawing or talking to people online."

Have an interview topic idea you would like to read about? We would love to hear it! Please let us know at [letss@skylight.org.au](mailto:letss@skylight.org.au)



# LETSS TALK ABOUT....

We asked, you told, and we listened! Recently, we asked for some feedback on what you would like to see more of within our LETSS issues. Many people shared that they would like us to cover 'heavier' topics. For instance, topics such as drug use, suicidal ideation, and safe sex just to name a few! So, as part of our commitment to bringing you the content you ask for, we have introduced a new section called "LETSS TALK ABOUT" in which we talk about some of the heavier topics surrounding mental health. However, we acknowledge that this might not be for everyone! So please only read whatever you feel comfortable with and for those who do chose to read ahead, we hope you enjoy and please feel free to provide feedback on the kind of topics you would like to see more of!



**Trigger Warning**  
Please be advised that this section discusses some difficult topics that may be triggering for some readers. If you require support, please reach out to a trusted person or contact LETSS on 1800 013 755

***In this issue we talk about***

**KEEPING  
SAFE  
ONLINE**

**HAVING A  
MENTAL  
HEALTH  
MODEL**



# KEEPING SAFE ONLINE

***How to protect yourself from cyber crime & scams, and what to do if you have been affected***

In recent months, many Australians have been getting pesky, annoying text messages that try to get them to click on suspicious links. We know we definitely have! While super annoying, it reminds us that everyday scammers are using sneaky tactics to try and scam people. Luckily, there are a number of steps you can take to protect yourself and help keep yourself safe online.

## **What is cybercrime?**

Cybercrime is a type of crime in which scammers attempt to deliberately deceive someone else for the purpose of tricking another person for financial gain or some other benefit or advantage.

## **Examples of scams**

- Romance or relationship scams
- Lottery or competition scams
- Banking or credit card online account
- Job & employment scams
- Investment scams
- Charity or medical scams
- Computer hacking
- Online shopping or auction scams
- Business Email Compromises





## Looking out for scams

In recent times, scams have evolved to become highly complex and sophisticated. However, there are some warning signs that you can look out for. This can include:

- Are you dating someone online who is trying to visit Australia but something happens to them and they suddenly need money?
- Have you received a small amount of money in your account which you have been asked to forward on but keeping a small/admin fee for yourself?
- Have you been receiving unsolicited calls or texts?
- Have you won an overseas lottery that you never entered?
- Have you been asked to confirm or update your personal information or details?
- Have you been contacted by a number of different "officials" who are asking for money?
- Have you been threatened with any arrests or summons for unpaid bills or fines?

If you have experienced any of these things or something that doesn't feel quite right, there are a number of things you can do.

- Do not share or divulge personal details or passwords
- Increase privacy settings on all professional or personal social media accounts
- Don't accept friend requests from people you don't know
- Limit the amount of personal information you share online that may be visible to people you don't know
- Keep your computer's security protection up to date

- Always verify unpaid bills, fines etc. with the relevant government agency
- Never send money via international funds transfer or store card (e.g., iTunes gift cards)
- Research and verify everything. Ask police or a trusted person if you need help with this

Being a victim of a scam can be extremely traumatic and stressful. If it happens to you, please know that you are not alone! In 2022, there were 72,253 reported cases of scam according to Scam Watch. It can happen to anyone and if you have been impacted there are a number of supports available. This includes:

### Victims of Crime SA

Victims of Crime SA is led by the commissioner for Victims' Rights. This service can provide information, advice, and support to help deal with the physical, emotional, and financial aspects of crime. They can also help victims in dealing with prosecution authorities and government agencies.

### Rebuild

Rebuild provides trauma-based counselling for victims of crime and peer support.

### Lifeline

Lifeline provides anyone experiencing a personal crisis with access to webchat and telephone mental health support, as well as suicide prevention services.

For more information on Scams and how to keep yourself safe online please visit <https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/>





## HAVING A MENTAL HEALTH MODEL

I was in the prime of my life when I got diagnosed with a mental illness. I had just moved interstate to start my dream job when I suddenly became unwell. My parents took me home, where I was admitted to hospital and eventually diagnosed with a mental illness.

I fought my diagnosis for a good couple of weeks. How could this be happening to me? Mental illness happens to other people! I'm very ashamed to say this now, but I thought people with mental illnesses were crazy, scary people. There was no way I was one of them! The stigma that was attached to mental health was now attached to me. I believed that someone with mental illness would be sick forever and could definitely never work, have a family, or live a "normal" life... which left me very scared for my future.

It wasn't until one of my treating doctors pulled me aside one day and confided in me that he too, had the same mental illness as me and that I could live with it and eventually I'd be alright.

I can't express how much that meant to me. He was the first person I had met with my condition and instantly it helped me remove some of the stigma I had put on myself and others with mental illnesses. Since that time, I continue to learn of and learn from other people who have mental illnesses. Reading books, researching online or watching mental health documentaries is mostly how I connect to others with mental illness. It has helped me feel less alone and more supported in my recovery.

Learning how other people cope with symptoms and the self-care strategies they use can be really helpful. Although every suggestion may not work for you, just knowing that there are people out there who understand what you are going through can be a massive support. It can also help to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health, help us to feel accepted, and inspire us to be proud of who we are.





Your mental health role model might be someone you know, or it might be someone you've never met. In fact, most of my mental health role models are famous people I've never met. Have you heard of Osher Gunsberg? I love him because he hosts one of my favourite reality tv shows, *The Bachelor*, but also because he is very public about his struggles with mental illness. Osher has written a book about it called *Back, After The Break* as well as discussing his mental health regularly on his podcast *The Osher Gunsberg Podcast*.

Another good book I have read, about mental health, is *First, We Make the Beast Beautiful* by Sarah Wilson. Sarah has a lot of good tips in her book about managing stress and anxiety as well as explaining why our bodies experience these feelings – helping the reader to see some mental health symptoms as a normal part of life.

My last tip for a good book is literally anything by Matthew Johnstone! His books are excellent, especially for when you are unwell and unable to concentrate for too long to read a big book. Matthew's books such as *I Had a Black Dog* and *Quiet the Mind* are short picture books that so accurately describe common thoughts and feelings that we can experience when we are unwell.

There are so many great books, resources online, and many services in the community. A quick Google search will help you find books, blogs, forums, documentaries, podcasts, services and support groups that might inspire you or a loved one to learn more about your mental health condition.

So if you or someone you love has just received a diagnosis or has been struggling with recovery, try and find a role model who can help guide the way and help you feel less alone.

And of course, here at LETSS all of our trained peer workers are here to support you (and those around you) when you need it. We are available on the phone from 5pm – 11:30pm on 1800 013 755 or via webchat at [www.letss.org.au](http://www.letss.org.au) every day of the year.

By Jolene, Peer Worker





# TORTELLINI & TOMATO SOUP

*IN UNDER 15 MINUTES*

## **Ingredients:**

- 1 pack pumpkin tortellini
- 2 cans tomato soup
- 1 pack frozen vegetables
- 1 cube chicken stock
- 1 loaf bread (optional)
- salt and pepper to taste

## **Method:**

1. In a large pot add tomato soup and dissolve 1 cube chicken stock. Simmer soup for 10-15 minutes until hot.
2. Add frozen vegetables and tortellini, then simmer until the tortellini is cooked (e.g. when they float to the surface).
3. Add salt and pepper to taste, and serve with toasted bread.

**LETSS  
COOK**

*The Vegetarian  
Edition*



# VEGETARIAN CREAMY TOMATO SPINACH GNOCCHI

## Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ large leek, sliced
- 1 brown onion, sliced
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 1 medium capsicum, diced
- 5-10 medium mushrooms, sliced
- 2 punnets of cherry tomatoes
- 1 cup white wine or vegetable stock
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter (I prefer Nuttelex)
- 1 packet of store bought gnocchi
- ½ cup grated parmesan cheese
- 500g baby spinach
- ½ cup cream
- Salt and pepper to taste

## Method:

1. In a large skillet/pot over medium heat, add the olive oil. Once hot, add leek and onion and cook for about 3 minutes or until translucent. Add a pinch of salt – remember to add the salt in layers to increase flavour!
2. Add garlic and cook for another 2-3 minutes until fragrant.
3. Add capsicum and mushrooms to the pot and cook until juices are released.
4. Add cherry tomatoes and cook until they begin to blister, about 5 minutes, and then begin to smash them down with a potato masher or the back of your cooking spoon. Be careful they don't squirt! Let the juices cook for about 1-2 minutes.
5. Deglaze the pan with the white wine or vegetable stock. Bring it back to a simmer and let it cook down for 1-2 minutes.
6. Stir in the butter to melt.
7. Add the gnocchi, stir to coat and make sure they are in a single layer to cook evenly (okay if this isn't possible but helps with even cooking). Cover the pan (can use foil if you don't have a lid) and cook about 2 minutes longer than the packet suggests. Mine usually take about 5-7 minutes. Be sure to taste test!
8. Stir in the parmesan, spinach and cream. Add any additional vegetable stock or cream if desired. The spinach will wilt with the heat of the gnocchi.
9. Serve immediately with additional parmesan and/or fresh basil and salt and pepper as desired.

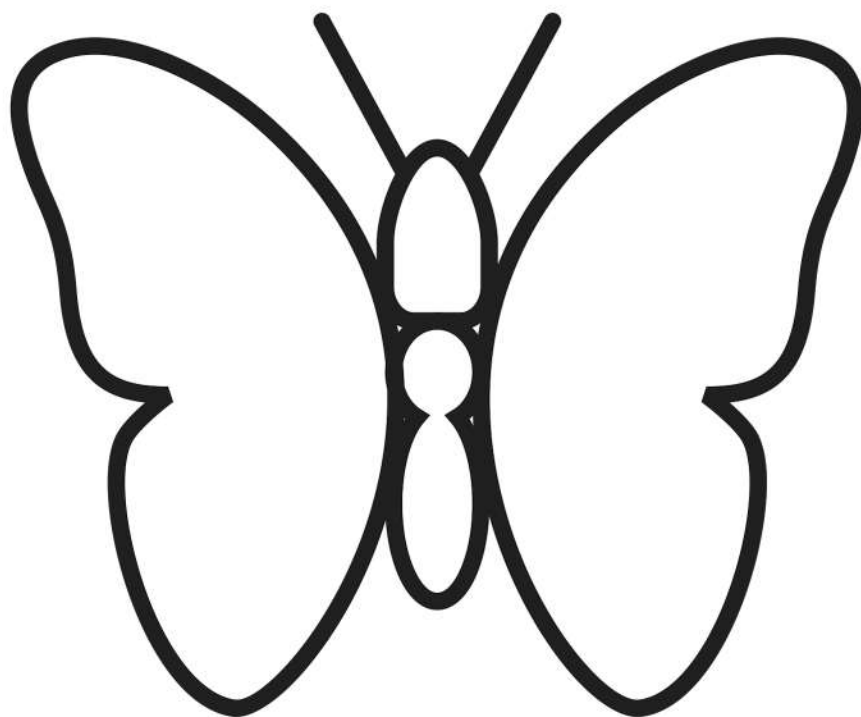
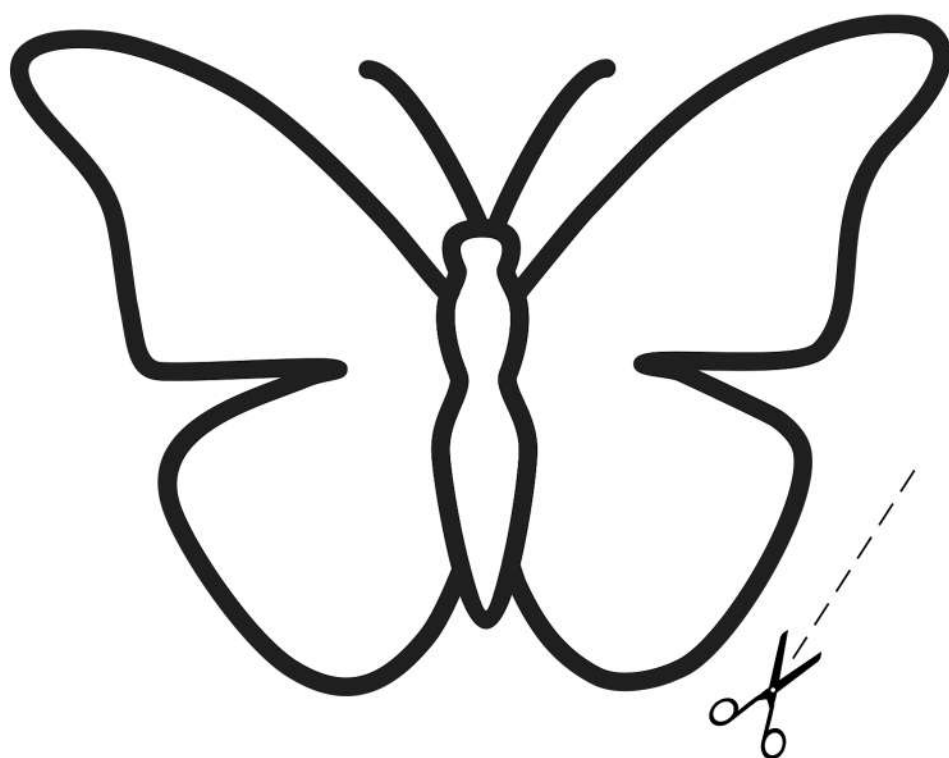


# CREATE YOUR OWN PAPER BUTTERFLY

1. Cut your paper butterfly out and place them against the coloured paper
2. Cut out the shape of the butterfly from the coloured paper
3. Glue or stick the two pieces together
4. Place somewhere special to admire your creation



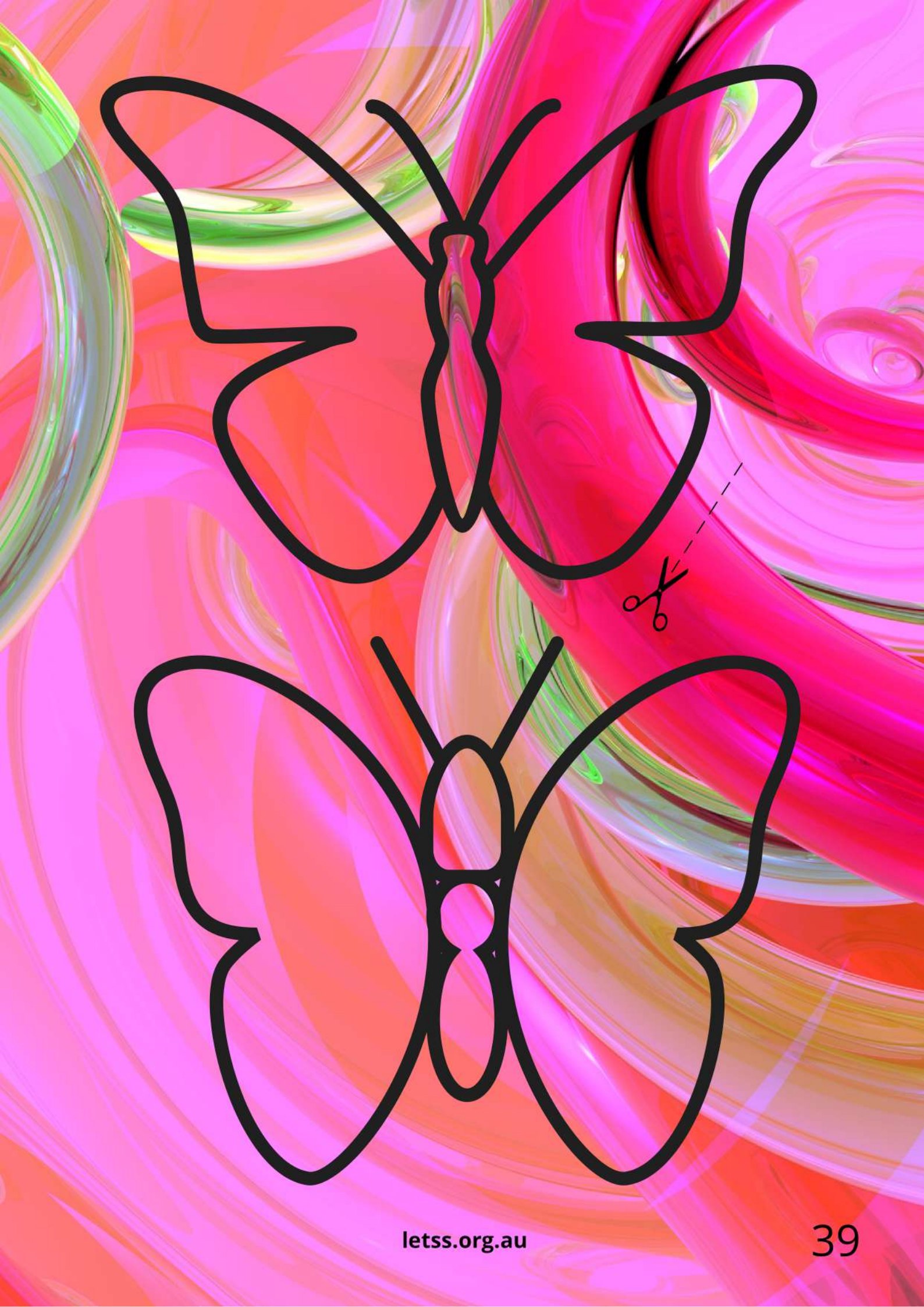


















# LETSS SHOUT OUT

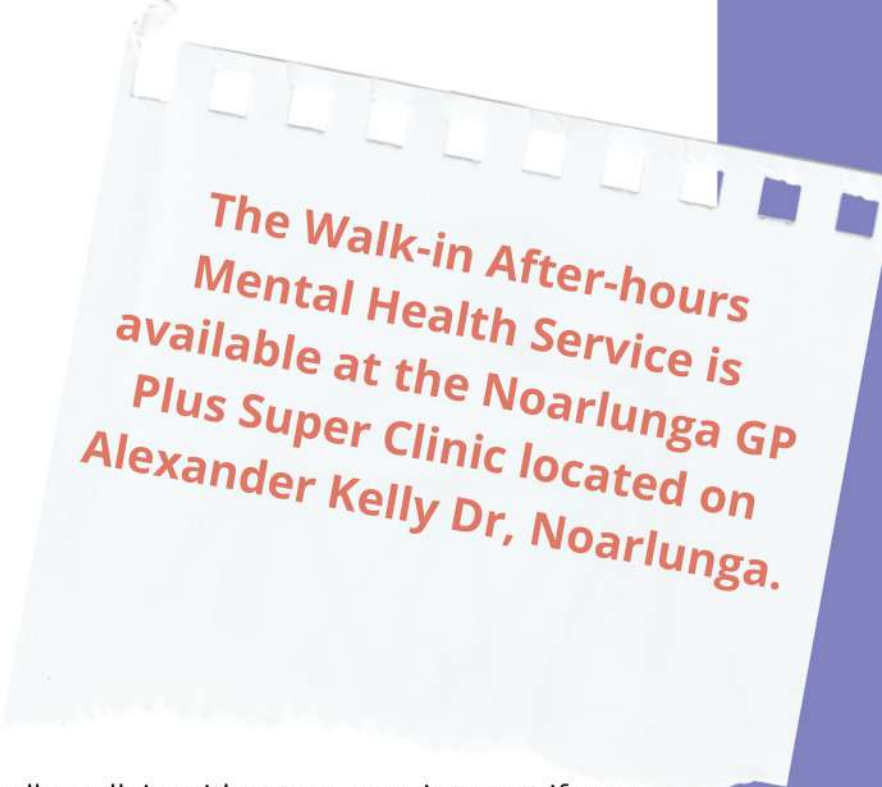
A big part of LETSS is helping community members navigate the mental health system and find valuable supports. That is why we wanted to dedicate a section to some of the wonderful (and free) services that we refer callers to which they might find helpful.

## Links to Wellbeing Walk-in, After-hours Mental Health Service

If you're in the southern suburbs, there is a fantastic resource available called the Links To Wellbeing Walk-in, After-hours Mental Health Service, often referred to as the Walk-in Clinic.

To access the service, you need to be over 16 and live in Central or Southern Adelaide but it is completely free. You can even get a cup of tea or coffee.

It is a service where you can literally walk in without an appointment if you need support for your mental health. This may mean you are feeling overwhelmed by stress, that you have had some bad news or grief, are struggling with situational issues or other mental health related issues. This might happen while waiting for your next appointment with a mental health professional.



**The Walk-in After-hours  
Mental Health Service is  
available at the Noarlunga GP  
Plus Super Clinic located on  
Alexander Kelly Dr, Noarlunga.**

## LETSS SHOUT OUT CONTINUED...

The service can also provide information and refer people to mental health and counselling services providing longer-term, ongoing support. It is important to know that there is often a waiting list to access these services.

The staff on site are two clinicians and a peer support worker who will offer friendly and non-judgmental support.



The service is open from 5-10pm every Monday to Friday, including public holidays, at the Noarlunga GP Plus Super Clinic on Alexander Kelly Drive, Noarlunga Centre. It's best to get there earlier, and ideally before 9pm, to ensure you get time to be seen long enough to address your issues properly.

The service is limited to not seeing people who are considered 'high risk', which means they don't see people who are heavily intoxicated or people who are actively hurting themselves or others. People at imminent risk will be referred to the emergency department at Noarlunga Hospital.

**Questions about the service can be made to 1300 093 720 between 5pm-10pm Mon-Fri or to Links to Wellbeing on 8326 3591 between 9am-5pm Mon-Fri. Or check out the website at <https://www.linkstowellbeing.org.au/service-listing/walk-in-after-hours-mental-health-service>**



# LETSS REVIEW

Welcome to LETSS review, where our Peer Workers review books, apps, podcasts and more!



Trigger Warning  
Please be advised that this section discusses some difficult topics that may be triggering for some readers. If you require support please contact us on 1800 013 75

## A LITTLE LIFE

*A Little Life* is a book by Hanya Yanagihara that is situated around the lives of four friends. A focal point is Jude and his experiences of childhood trauma, how this affects his internal and external life as he ages, as well its impacts on the people around him.

This book is a very raw account of childhood trauma and how it stays with a person throughout their life. It highlights the importance of seeking help and reminds us that we have supports around us even if our minds trick us otherwise. I would suggest to engage in this book with caution and to remain compassionate with yourself through the duration. At 720 pages, it could be considered daunting but with Hanya Yanagihara's writing style there was never a dull moment. My favourite book I have read to date.

## THE IMPERFECTS

A podcast about how perfectly imperfect we all are. Join Hugh, Ryan and Josh for their chats with a variety of interesting people and learn how we can apply some valuable take-aways to our own imperfect lives.

The podcast *The Imperfects* was brought to life by Hugh Van Cuylenburg (author of *The Resilience Project* and *Let Go*) and is co-hosted by Ryan Shelton and Josh Van Cuylenburg.

The trio interview interesting people including celebrities, health professionals, TV personalities, musicians/artists and sporting legends to provide a space of safety to open up about vulnerability.

Well-known guests chat about their own experiences of being 'imperfect', discussing topics around mental health, grief and loss, parenting, and what has helped them along the way. Some episodes feature guests such as Missy Higgins (Australian musician), Travis Boak (AFL athlete) and Dr Billy Garvey (paediatrician) just to name a select few. The podcast also provides educational content around mental health from leading professionals in their field.

I have been a keen listener of this podcast since reading Hugh's book *The Resilience Project*. I particularly enjoy the informal nature of the discussions as this makes the content accessible and relatable. The creators of this podcast have structured the content in a way that provides a generous balance of lived experience stories and educational interviews from trained professionals, with opportunities for laughter weaved in along the way. Ryan Shelton, being a professional comedian, never fails to inject great humour into the pre- and post-interview discussion, always making me laugh out loud (often embarrassing myself in public!).

If you are interested in story telling from those with lived experience and learning new things from experts in their field, all while having a good old laugh, I highly recommend this podcast. This podcast is available to listen on Spotify, Apple, Stitcher and IHeart Radio, with some episodes also available on YouTube. To find out more, go to their website: <https://theresilienceproject.com.au/podcast/>

# LETSS Keep Connected!

LETSS is a free, non-crisis, peer support service for people in the Adelaide Metropolitan Region.

Call us or webchat

7 days a week from 5:00pm - 11.30pm

**Information | Navigation | Support**



**1800 013 755**



**@LetssAus**



**/LETSSAus**



**letss.org.au**

Links to Wellbeing is a consortium commissioned by the Adelaide PHN and run in partnership between Neami National, Mind Australia, Skylight Mental Health and Uniting Care Wesley Bowden.

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